

## SENATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

### MINUTES

Meeting of Thursday, May 16, 1996  
Room BC-110, 10:30

**Present:** E. Besso, P. Bird, T. Bui (Chair), G. Garvey, D. Gold, F. Haghighat, E. Loo (recording secretary), D. Markiewicz, D. Pariser, R. Storms, J. Tomberlin, M. Vipond

**Guests:** F. Bird, J. Jans

**Regrets:** V. Baba, S. Suen

**Absent:** K. Bolh

### DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED AND DISTRIBUTED TO SENATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

SRC-05-16-96-A	Agenda for the SRC Meeting of May 16, 1996
SRC-03-21-96-M	Minutes of the SRC Meeting of March 21, 1996
SRC-05-16-96-D1	Policy on the Distribution of the Frais Indirect from Quebec Government.
SRC-05-16-96-D2	Principes et normes d'éthique des établissements universitaires du Québec en enseignement et en recherche .
SRC-05-16-96-D3	Code of Conduct for Research Involving Humans.
SRC-05-16-96-D4	Réponses aux questions posées aux universités sur la recherche dans l'Exposé de la situation.
SRC-05-16-96-D5	Memorandum dated March 20, 1996 from Mr. G. Kealey, President, Social Science Federation of Canada and Mr. John Scott, President, Canadian Federation for the Humanities, re: Science and Technology Strategy.
SRC-05-16-96-D6	Dr. Bui's response to Mr. R. Davidson, Director, Research and Policy Analysis of AUCC with regard to the preparation for the AUCC input into the 1997 federal budget.
SRC-05-16-96-D7	NSERC Reallocation Exercise.

### CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m.

#### 1. **Approval of Agenda (SRC-05-16-96-A)**

The Agenda for the meeting was approved.

## **2. Approval of Minutes from the meeting of March 21, 1995.**

P. Bird noted that Item 7 of the minutes was not clear. The Minutes for the March meeting were approved.

## **3. Business arising from Minutes**

The Policy on the Distribution of the Frais Indirect from Québec Government was developed by a committee whose membership consists of Drs. E.M. Besso, D. Markiewicz, D. Pushkar Gold, P. Bird, D. Pariser, C. Suen, J. Tomberlin, Mr. J. Fryer and T. Bui as Chair. At the last meeting of the committee, Mr. I. Dudeck, Director, Budget and Ms. J. Gagné, Manager, Research Funds were invited to attend to give input regarding the implementation of the policy. The final document was submitted to the Vice-Rector, Academic for the Office of the Rector's approval.

For the year 1996-1997, an amount of \$ 286,000 which is approximately one sixth of the total amount of frais indirect has been put aside. This amount includes \$20,000 for translation of grant proposals - That leaves \$266,000 for distribution. Treasury will be informed of the amount to be transferred to each Faculty, Library and to the Vice-Rector, Academic.

## **4. Report of the Chair**

Chair announced that Dr. J. Stewart of the Department of Psychology was recently elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

États généraux de l'éducation: our response has been incorporated into the common response from CREPUQ and the document will be sent directly to the États généraux, the Commission will be meeting in the coming weeks.

Document de travail on the Policy on Science and Technology of Québec: Chair has developed Concordia's response for the Rector to submit to the comité exécutif of CREPUQ at its meeting in April.

The visit of Ms. Monique Charbonneau, President of CEFRIQ was postponed due to cancellation of the last SRC meeting - Her visit must be re-scheduled in the Fall.

Chair is leaving his office on June 1. He thanked committee members for the tremendous help he received during his mandate.

## **5. Report of the Director, Office of Research Services**

- Staff complement: Dr. Brigitte Lebreton is the new manager of the Industrial Liaison Unit, she has experience in both teaching at UCLA and at CITEC in Montreal. Sophie Fontaine is the new Contract Officer, she replaces N. Plant who has been promoted to Research Grants Officer.

## 5. Report of the Director, Office of Research Services

- Brief mention of the Open House which took place at ORS on Tuesday, it was a success, very well attended. A bookmark was created which has on the back, information about what ORS is doing now and what we are expecting to have after summer 1996 and this includes our presence on the website where accessibility to the calendar and funding sources, information about research policies, the HORIZONS research brochure.
- R. Mitchell, Grant Manager, attended the Canadian Association of University Research Administrators (CAURA) meeting. There were two or three points to bring to your attention although they are not determined at this point:
  - SSHRC spoke at length about the development of their new 5-year plan in which the principal departures perhaps or reorientations that we noticed was much greater emphasis on students training, the equivalent of NSERC high quality personnel development and communication of results so that this is the link with the accountability and the impact that the work that is funded by SSHRC increasingly needs to demonstrate and it will be something that we incorporate in our workshops organised by ORS for applicants to these councils.
  - The continuing progression towards multi-disciplinarity and what experience for it in the work that is proposed to the councils for granting and, hand in hand with it, the importance to not forget about managing such efforts, the management structures when there are teams and when there are larger applications.
  - The tri-councils intend to be fully electronic in their handling of grants applications for 1997, so this year is the last transition year and after this, the signature grids have been worked out, the forwarding of acknowledgements as well as any other material is intended to become electronic on the part of the councils under full expectations that applications will be submitted electronically.
- I would like to share with you the research funding results, in a preliminary form that we've received during the last month. They are preliminary because in most cases they reflect global figures in the case of Agency, in other words the success rate may reflect our total performances as opposed to the individual programmes with NSERC, SSHRC, etc. At the last meeting we had only received the SSHRC Strategic grant competition results in which we did not receive any awards, overall we did not achieve very high scores in terms of success rate. Concordia's success rate was 17% in terms of applications funded relative to those submitted, whereas the national average was 30%. Concordia's performance has been going slightly down in terms of success rate since 1991-1992 but the difference between Concordia and the national success rate has stayed relatively constant, so we are not losing ground relatively to the national performance. It is note worthy that the budget for SSHRC itself has dipped down from \$101 M in 1993-1994 to a projected \$79 M for 1996-1997.
- In terms of NSERC, we are in a healthier position in that we have a 50% success rate for Concordia, the national success rate is around 40%.
- FCAR, in terms of nouveau chercheurs this year there was an introduction of an opportunity to apply as a team of nouveau chercheur as well as individual. In the

individual nouveaux chercheurs competition Concordia has an 18% success rate versus provincial of 42%; we were unsuccessful in obtaining any team of nouveau chercheurs grants. We submitted three and none were funded, there was a 36% success rate provincially for that aspect. We have submitted two centre renewal applications and both were funded although one of the two was on a one-year basis.

- She concluded by briefly mentioning her overview of contract research activity for 1996-1997. Broadly since 1991-1992 we have been decreasing in terms of contract revenue every year until 1994-1995, there was a slight increase with fund at \$980,000 for 1994-1995 and the target at 1995-1996 at the third-quarter was \$997,000, we are climbing back the slope there.
- The Fine Arts/Engineering collaboration on animation and multi-media appears to be off to a good start, we had one meeting at which the two faculties which had not previously interacted, heard what the interest were, we have two groups formed for developing this multi-disciplinary approach.

## **6. Question Period**

A question about Concordia's low success rate (about 17%) in this year's SSHRC competition was raised. It was pointed out that SSHRC's funding philosophy is different from that of other granting agencies such as NSERC, MRC and FCAR in that SSHRC emphasizes the importance of research projects while the other agencies emphasize research careers and programmes of research. The corollary of this difference in funding philosophy is that funding from SSHRC is not as stable as funding from NSERC or FCAR. There is a need to convince SSHRC that a much more stable funding policy is needed in the social sciences and humanities.

E. Besso said that in the 5 year plan of SSHRC, there are three components: research support, targeted research and continuing research and the question she has is what is continuing research as opposed to research?

On the low rate of success in SSHRC, E. Besso remarked that granting agencies relay the results to the principal applicants. She is only aware of the result of principal investigators who have submitted an application through the University to a granting agency. She knows the success rate for Concordia-based applications but is not aware of awards granted to other institutions where Concordia researchers are co-investigators. We only hear about them at the end of the academic year when the PI is paying back to the co-investigators at Concordia.

Is there any attempt to tract down particular kinds of research that either meet with great favour or meet with great disfavour by SSHRC? Any attempt to look at issues or topics get funded?

E. Besso answered that she is not aware if Concordia has done any tracking in the past, this has not been done in the past two years. In the last five years both NSERC and SSHRC had gone through an exercise of strategic areas and one of the factors is to be aware of the strategic areas.

## **7b. Conduct for Research Involving Humans**

Chair introduced Dr. Fred Bird who was Chair of the Committee to develop the University Code of Ethics, Dr. J. Jans, Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). Recently the University received the Tri-Council document on Code of Conduct for Research Involving Humans, it is important for the SRC to give input on this document. Chair understands that the HREC will meet sometime in June to discuss this document and to develop Concordia's response. Dr. Jans will chair that committee.

F. Bird received a copy of the document independently, he felt that the University should respond to this document, there is an issue of timing, they want responses by July 15. He raised major points that need to be looked at.

J. Jans pointed out three major issues:

- Evaluating scientific validity is something at the university level we have never done before.
- Subject-centred approach: he thinks that is good, we have always taken that approach on the committee itself.
- The notion of continuing ethical review: something we have done on the HREC. Certainly the Animal Care Committee (ACC) requires ongoing review each year, there is an update on procedures and this is suggesting that we should do that with our research involving human subjects as well.

There is a question about resources, in order to implement what is stated in here, the question of resources has to be addressed. Granting agencies are concerned about this issue as much as universities are, so perhaps agencies should look at the issue of how resources could be found.

The educational aspect of policy was also raised. It is important to discuss and to inform people about the issues rather than to simply enforce a policy. Should universities have courses along this line?

D. Gold agrees that having scientific review done in universities is dangerous, may be completely impossible. Besides duplicating the efforts that could be done by the granting agencies, the university lacks resources. Regarding an application in psychology, for example, the only people within the institution who could evaluate the merit are the colleagues, who will be in a conflict of interest. Secondly, the question of harm and avoiding harm to subjects including apprehension, fear, anxiety and embarrassment, it is impossible to do psychological research without potentially causing some of this.

They have neglected to distinguish between research which is for research purposes and research which is for pedagogical purposes. It is impossible for a researcher to follow those guidelines whether his primary purpose is for the acquisition of knowledge or teaching or training. When you define everything too inclusively to have absolutely everything, then you cannot apply all these rules which are perfectly valid in some situations but not others.

Due to time constraint, Chair asked committee members to send their comments or suggestions directly to Dr. Jans prior to the HREC meeting.

## **7a. NSERC Reallocation Exercise (SRC-05-16-96-D7)**

In 1993-94, NSERC started the first exercise of re-allocation of the budgets for grant selection committees and in that exercise 10% of the total research grant budgets (20.5M) is kept for reallocation to committees over the following 4 fiscal years. NSERC asked each grant selection committee to develop a proposal stating why that particular grant selection committee should receive the reallocation money. The criteria used for that exercise were:

40%	Quality of research in a discipline (according to international standards)
25%	Discipline dynamics (growth)
20%	Training of highly qualified personnel
15%	Relative cost of research (marginalized)

Subsequent to that exercise and started in 1995-96 each grant selection committee is allocated a percentage increase (or decrease). Some examples are:

Cell Biology	4%
Chemistry	4.3%
Statistics	3.2%
Electrical Engineering	4.2%
Computer Science	3.9%
Chem Eg	3.1%
Physics	-0.8%
Pure Applied Maths	-0.1%

Every four years NSERC planned to repeat this exercise. There is a couple of changes in the new exercise: one is that in the first exercise it was the grant selection committees who developed the proposal, now it is the community of that discipline who is responsible for the development of the submission.

It was remarked that at the last exercise, the committee responsible for evaluating the submissions has only one representative in the life sciences and this probably hurts all the Life Sciences in the reallocation exercise. Something might be said about the representation on the committee.

Chair suggested that committee members should submit their comments before May 25.

## **7c. Principes et normes d'éthique des établissements universitaires du Québec en enseignement et en recherche (SRC-05-16-96-D2)**

A couple of years ago the University formed a committee chaired by F. Bird to develop the code of ethics and the committee submitted the document to Senate. It was revised by the Steering Committee of Senate and later approved by Senate. The document became the University Code of Ethics. Last year, the comité de la recherche of CREPUQ formed a sub-committee (groupe de travail) consisting of representatives from Québec universities to develop a common policy from the point of view of CREPUQ. The groupe de travail has submitted to CREPUQ the final document Principes et normes d'éthique des établissements universitaires du Québec en enseignement et en recherche. We are asked to look at the document from CREPUQ and look at the University Code of Ethics and in light of the new document.

Chair asked committee member to submit their comments by May 24.

**8. For Information**

**9. Other Business**

P. Bird proposed a motion of thanks to Dr. Bui for his service to Concordia as Associate Vice-Rector, Academic (Research). Dr. Bui's term ends on May 31, 1996.

It was moved that the meeting be adjourned.

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